



## F·E·G·S LONG ISLAND VOLUNTEERS GIVE THE GREATEST GIFT

### *A Celebration of Helping Others Help Themselves*

“Everything came to us as a wonderful blessing,” the note said, “My son said ‘are we rich?’ I told him yes, because someone with a good heart is sending these gifts. We are speechless, but we pray that God continues to bless all the families involved in helping others in need.”

Several months ago, a volunteer from the F-E-G-S Health and Human Services System’s Adopt-a-Family program in Long Island, received that note from a mother of two young children who had been helped with clothing, shoes, and food.

The mother also enclosed some drawings her children had made, which touched the hearts of Long Island volunteers and staff alike. The design on one of the drawings, by the woman’s young son, Michael, was incorporated into a magnet promoting volunteerism at F-E-G-S.



(L-R) Aileen Hoffman, Director of Family Services and Debbie Weiss, Supervisor, LI Volunteer Services, honor more than 50 volunteers for their outstanding efforts in helping Long Islanders.

Rewarding experiences like that are the reason that the volunteer programs have been so successful over the last several years. More than 50 volunteers were honored recently at a breakfast held at the Syosset office of UJA-Federation of New York.

One highlight was the presentation of a special gift to Ellen Schieren, of Hewlett Harbor, herself a volunteer, who helped to start and for many years coordinated the volunteer program for F-E-G-S on Long Island.

Special recognition also went to Joel Becker, of Hauppauge, a semi-retired consulting engineer, who leads a group of a dozen F-E-G-S volunteers. They solicit and refurbish used personal computers from companies and distribute them to F-E-G-S clients who cannot afford new ones.

“Our volunteers’ personal, one-on-one involvement in the lives of those in need is invaluable, brings to light the mission of F-E-G-S, and is a primary reason that F-E-G-S is so effective,” said Kathy Rosenthal, Vice President for Regional Operations.

Debbie Weiss, Supervisor of Volunteer Services for F-E-G-S Long Island, cited several programs for special recognition at this year’s ceremony:

- **Adopt-a-Family** connects individuals and families who can help with those in need. F-E-G-S volunteers from synagogue groups, Hebrew school classes, Shabbat groups, and a number of individual families now serve some 80 families. In addition to helping their neighbors with food, personal care items, household items, clothing, and holiday items, the F-E-G-S volunteers build ongoing relationships that provide emotional support and understanding to the recipient families.
- **A Computer Donation Program**, through which a corps of tech-savvy volunteers refurbish donated personal computers and give them to families who cannot afford to buy one. More than 150 individuals and families have benefited so far from this unique program, which helps students compete in a computer-literate world and helps parents develop job search and other skills for today’s employment markets.
- **Hugs by Phone** volunteers reach out on a regular basis by telephone to F-E-G-S clients, to let them know someone is thinking of them.

### *Volunteers of All Ages Work from Synagogues and Community Groups*

F-E-G-S works actively with volunteers of all ages from synagogues and community groups to develop programs and projects that offer satisfying activities to volunteers while providing tangible services to people in need:

- **Temple Beth Torah** volunteers bring cooked meals every month to ten needy families.



Ellen Schieren, our volunteer founder of F-E-G-S Long Island Volunteer Services proudly displays the letter of gratitude from a family helped by F-E-G-S.

- Seventy congregants from **The Jericho Jewish Center** are part of an *Angels in Training* program in which they provide a variety of volunteer projects, including one in which their Hebrew school children began a *Mitzvah Suds* campaign, collecting quarters and detergents in laundry bags in order to help needy families.
- Forty junior high school students from the **Jericho Middle School’s Community Service Club** coordinated a food drive for clients of the F-E-G-S Hempstead Multi-Service Center.
- Students from the **AP Willets School** in Syosset conducted a *Mother’s Day Adopt-a-Mom* program to give gifts to struggling single mothers.
- Another group of volunteers has turned the Children’s Library at the Hempstead Multi-Service Center, which has been funded by the **Starbucks Coffee Company and Books for Kids Inc.**, into a cozy, warm and inviting children’s library featuring more than 400 brand new books.
- **B’nai B’rith Girls** volunteer weekly at the children’s library in at the Hempstead Multi-Service Center.
- Volunteers in the **Prison Families Anonymous** program offer emotional support, information, and referrals to individuals visiting family members who are incarcerated in two Long Island prisons.

### *Partners In Dignity, a New Initiative of UJA-Federation, Offers Rewarding Opportunities for Volunteers*

A new initiative, **F-E-G-S Partners in Dignity**, the Long Island Regional Care Center for the *Jewish Healing and Hospice Partnership* sponsored by UJA-Federation of New York, is currently building an additional corps of volunteers to work with individuals and families facing end-of-life issues. Volunteer opportunities include providing helping hands to patients and families, such as driving patients to medical appointments, respite time for caregivers, emotional support by phone, and working with F-E-G-S case workers to help ease the way for those facing serious or terminal illness.

Gail Magaliff, F-E-G-S Chief Operating Officer, praised the work of Long Island’s corps of 250 volunteers. “Volunteers extend the reach of our services and our level of caring in immeasurable ways,” she said. “They are a strategic and integral part of F-E-G-S services that each year assist nearly 25,000 Long Island residents.”

In acknowledging the contributions of its volunteers, Ms. Weiss added, “Thanks to your efforts, we reach thousands of people in large and small ways. You help us build bridges from community to community, from home to home, from person to person, and from hand to hand.”

F-E-G-S Health and Human Services System is one of the largest and most diversified voluntary health and human services organizations in the United States. It serves more than 80,000 people each year throughout Long Island and New York City with an extensive network of family services, behavioral health, employment, educational, residential, and home care services.

**For more information about F-E-G-S Long Island Volunteer Services call: 516.496.7550 ■**

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